

REMARKS OF SECRETARY OF
STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE TO
THE AMERICAN ISRAEL PUBLIC
AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, as my colleagues know, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) is holding its annual policy conference in Washington this week, and most of us will be receiving visits this week from our constituents who are here for this important yearly event.

Yesterday, Mr. Speaker, our Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, delivered the key address on behalf of the Administration to the AIPAC conference. Secretary Rice articulated in a clear and elegant manner the diverse and intense ties that bind the United States and our democratic ally Israel. As Secretary Rice reaffirmed as she began her speech, "Israel has no greater friend and no stronger supporter than the United States of America."

The strength of our relationship with Israel has transcended administrations and political parties. It was a critical and an intense relationship from the founding of the state of Israel in 1948, when President Harry Truman extended U.S. recognition to the Jewish state only eleven minutes after its independence was proclaimed. This relationship has continued through 57 years and eleven presidential administrations of both parties. Israel continues to enjoy strong bipartisan and bicameral support here in the Congress of the United States.

Though Israel and the United States have had close ties for more than half a century, conditions have changed, the world has changed, and our relationship has changed with the times as well. Secretary Rice has put American-Israeli ties in the framework of our ongoing fight against terrorism and our increasingly globalized world. She has emphasized the continuing importance of America's relationship with Israel to the American people and its relevance to the Administration's effort to foster democracy and respect for human rights and the rule of law throughout the Middle East.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that Secretary Rice's address be placed in the RECORD, and I urge my colleagues to read and give attention to her thoughtful remarks.

SECRETARY OF STATE CONDOLEEZZA RICE, REMARKS AT THE AIPAC ANNUAL POLICY CONFERENCE MAY 23, 2005

Thank you very much. Let me begin by saying that Israel has no greater friend and no stronger supporter than the United States of America. For over half a century, AIPAC has strengthened the religious, cultural and political bonds that unite our two great nations, and I thank you for that.

The United States and Israel share much in common. We both affirm the innate freedom and dignity of every human life, not as prizes that people confer to one another, but as divine gifts of the Almighty. As Thomas Jefferson once wrote, "The God that gave us liberty and life gave them to us at the same time."

Moral clarity is an essential virtue in our world today and for 60 years cynics and skeptics have proven that we have been looking to false choices in the Middle East. They

have claimed that we must choose either freedom or stability, either democracy or security. They have said that the United States could either uphold its principles or advance its policies.

But by trying to purchase stability at the price of liberty, we achieved neither and we saw the result of that on a fine September morning. That is why President Bush has rejected 60 years of false choices in the Middle East. And as he said last week at the International Republican Institute, "The United States has a new policy, a strategy that recognizes that the best way to defeat the ideology that uses terror as a weapon is to spread freedom and democracy."

The President holds the deep belief that all human beings desire and deserve to live in liberty. This idea, of course, did not immediately find favor. Many continued to defend the false choices of the past. But we knew then and we know now America's message is clear, our principles are sound and our policies are right, and today the nations of the world are finally joining with the United States to support the cause of freedom.

We measure our success in the democratic revolutions that have stunned the entire world: vibrant revolutions of rose and orange and purple and tulip and cedar. The destiny of the Middle East is bound up in this global expansion of freedom. The days of thinking that this region was somehow immune to democracy are over. Working with our G-8 partners, the United States has created the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative to build partnerships with people in the region who are working for greater liberty.

The flagship of this bold new policy is the Forum for the Future, an unprecedented international venue to amplify the voices of reform that are redefining the region. Together, we will tackle the urgent goals of the Forum: political openness, economic liberty, educational opportunity and the empowerment of women.

Today, nations all across the world are speaking a common language of reform and they are helping citizens throughout the broader Middle East to transform the parameters of debate in their societies. The people of this region are expressing ideas and taking actions that would have been unthinkable only one year ago.

Some in the Arab media have even asked why the only real democracies in the Middle East are found in the "occupied lands" of Iraq and the Palestinian territories. What an incredible thought. Today, citizens in the region are demanding that their governments respond to this simple, audacious question.

And many states will have to answer their people's call for genuine reform. Jordan and Bahrain and Qatar and Morocco are all taking steps to introduce greater openness into their political systems. Egypt has amended its constitution with electoral reform. And even Saudi Arabia has held multiple elections. And just last week, remarkably, the Kuwaiti legislature granted its women citizens the right to vote.

Kuwait's recognition that it must include all of its people in political life is, hopefully, an example that its neighbors will follow. In Lebanon, hundreds of thousands of citizens have demanded an end to the foreign suffocation of their country. With strong international support, led by the United States and by France, and with an explicit mandate from the United Nations Security Council, Syria has gotten the message loud and clear that it is not welcome in Lebanon.

The Syrian regime has withdrawn its decades-long military presence. And at the end of this month, the Lebanese people will go to the polls and set a new course of action. But we cannot rest. Syria must also remove its intelligence forces and allow the Lebanese people to be free.

To be sure, a vital source of inspiration for all of these reformers comes from the people of Iraq, who defied threats of murder to vote in free elections in January. They declared with one voice that the will of the people, not the whim of a dictator, would determine Iraq's future. They declared with that same voice that no Iraqi regime would ever again torture its people, invade its neighbors, attack its neighbors and offer financial incentives to Palestinian homicide bombers.

Today, Iraq has a transitional government that will soon begin framing a new national constitution. Free nations everywhere have rallied to Iraq's side. There is a coalition of 30 countries helping the Iraqi people to defend themselves from murderers and terrorists. NATO is training Iraq's army officers, police forces and civilian administrators. And next month, at the request of Iraq's new government, the United States and the European Union will co-host an international conference to build greater support for democracy, prosperity and security.

Now, I speak to these reform efforts because the United States looks to a future and has a vision of a day when Israel is no longer the sole democracy in the Middle East. This aspiration shapes the very heart of our approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as well. For four years, President Bush refused to meet with Yasser Arafat. He did so because Arafat valued neither Israel's security nor his own people's liberty.

There were those who ridiculed this principled decision as if the refusal to negotiate with a man who aided and abetted terrorism somehow revealed a lack of concern for peace. America and Israel had tried before to gain peace where democracy did not exist and we are not going down that road again.

Instead, President Bush advanced a vision of two democratic states: Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. And today, the Palestinian people are trying to meet this democratic challenge. In January, they voted in historic elections for a leader who rejects violence as a path to peace. President Abbas has committed to both freedom and security and President Bush has offered his hand in friendship, just as he promised he would.

In three days, when they meet together here in Washington, they will build a relationship that is one that is based on the good faith that only democratic leaders can bring. The President will be clear that there are commitments to be met, that there are goals to be met, but that democracy is a goal that is unassailable and incontrovertible.

Prime Minister Sharon has also recognized that Israel is gaining a legitimate partner for peace and he has made courageous decisions that could change the course of history. Beginning in August, Prime Minister Sharon will implement his plan to withdraw from Gaza and parts of the West Bank. Israel's disengagement strategy presents an unprecedented and incredibly delicate opportunity for peace and we must all work together to capitalize on this precious moment.

To strengthen our present opportunities, all nations must meet their obligations. Israel must take no actions that prejudice a final settlement or jeopardize the true viability of the Palestinian state. And Israel must help to create the conditions for the emergence of that democratic state.

The Palestinian Authority must advance democratic reform and it must dismantle all terrorist networks in its society.

Arab states must end incitement in their media, cut off all support for terrorism and extremist education, and establish normal relations with Israel.

To nurture our present opportunity, President Bush proposed and the Quartet nations

endorsed the appointment of James Wolfensohn as Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement. Jim Wolfensohn will help the Israelis and Palestinians coordinate on non-military aspects of their disengagement, including disposition of assets and revitalization of the Palestinian economy.

To protect our present opportunity, President Bush has sent General William Ward to help the Palestinians reform their security services. General Ward is also coordinating all international security assistance to the Palestinians, including training and equipment.

To expand our present opportunity, the United States has greatly increased our financial assistance to the Palestinian people. We are pledging \$350 million to help the Palestinians build the free institutions of their democratic state. This is an unprecedented contribution to the future of peace and freedom in the Middle East.

Yes, this past year has brought forth a dramatic shift in the political landscape of the Middle East. But this moment of transformation is very fragile and it still has committed enemies, particularly the Government of Iran, which is the world's leading sponsor of terrorism.

The United States has focused the world's attention on Iran's pursuit of weapons of mass destruction. And along with our allies, we are working to gain full disclosure of Iran's efforts to obtain nuclear weapons. The world must not tolerate any Iranian attempt to develop a nuclear weapon. Nor can it tolerate Iran's efforts to subvert democratic governments through terrorism.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Middle East is changing and even the unelected leaders in Tehran must recognize this fact. They must know that the energy of reform that is building all around them will one day inspire Iran's citizens to demand their liberty and their rights. The United States stands with the people of Iran.

President Bush has declared that advancing the cause of freedom is the calling of our time and in the broader Middle East, his policies are expanding the scope of what many thought possible. With our support, the people of the region are demonstrating that all great human achievement begins with free individuals who do not accept that the reality of today must also be the reality of tomorrow. Of course, there will always be cynics and skeptics who hold the misguided belief that if they can not see their goal, then it cannot be possible. They will try to elevate their cynicism by calling it realism and they will criticize all who echo the stirring words of Theodore Hertzl, "If you will it, it is no dream."

In 1776, cynics and skeptics could not see an independent America, so they doubted that it could be so. They saw only 13 colonies that could never hang together and would surely hang separately. But there were others who had a vision, a vision of the United States as a free and great nation, a democracy, and one day, a complete multiethnic society. With perseverance, the American people made that vision a reality. In 1948, cynics and skeptics could not see the promise of Israel, so they doubted it, said it could never be fulfilled. They saw only a wounded and wandering people beset on all sides by hostile armies.

But there were those who had another vision, a vision of a Jewish state that would shelter its children, defend its sacred homeland, turn its desert soil green and reaffirm the principles of freedom and democracy. With courage, the Israeli people made that vision a reality.

Today, cynics and skeptics cannot see a democratic Middle East, so they doubt that it is a realistic goal. They focus only on the

despotism that has shaped the region's past and still defines much of its present. But ladies and gentlemen, make no mistake, freedom is on the march in Afghanistan and Iraq and in Lebanon and in Georgia and Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan and in the Palestinian territories.

Yes, it is hard and progress is uneven. There are violent men who will stop at nothing to prevent democracy's rise. Yet people all across the Middle East today are talking and demonstrating and sharing their vision for a democratic future. Many have given their very lives to this noble purpose.

The United States and Israel must defend the aspirations of all people who long to be free. And with our unwavering support, we can help to make the promise of democracy a reality for the entire region. Thank you very much.

NORTH SAN DIEGO COUNTY AREA WATER RECYCLING PROJECT

HON. RANDY "DUKE" CUNNINGHAM

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. CUNNINGHAM. Mr. Speaker, I am introducing legislation today that will authorize the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation to continue to participate in the construction of the North San Diego County Area Water Recycling Project which also includes, as a new component, Phase II of the Olivenhain Water Treatment Plant. This project is very important in the overall water supply plan in my Congressional District and I am proud to offer this legislation that will assist in its further development.

The North San Diego County Water Recycling Project is a regional cooperative effort by the San Elijo Joint Powers Authority, the Leucadia County Water District, the City of Carlsbad and the Olivenhain Municipal Water District. When completed, the project will add up to 5 billion gallons annually to the San Diego region's local water supply. With years of drought, exploding growth rates and California's reduced intake of Colorado River water, this recycled water has become vital to the region and it is extremely important that the project is completed to its full potential.

In addition to the benefits to the San Diego County region, numerous federal objectives are advanced through the development of the North County Water Recycling Project. The project will directly reduce the surrounding region's demand for imported water from the environmentally sensitive California Bay/Delta and will help California live within its 4.4 million acre-feet allocation of water from the Colorado River. The project will also reduce the amount of effluent discharged into coastal waters and advance D.S./Mexico border environmental initiatives.

The legislation I offer today will increase the overall authorization ceiling for this project from \$20 million to \$35 million within the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program. It is important to note that the majority of the funds necessary to construct this project are coming from local sources which represent a heavy financial burden on local agencies. Federal participation will help make this innovative water supply project a reality.

Mr. Speaker, I ask that this legislation be given prompt consideration.

HONORING MASTER SERGEANT
JOSE M. LOPEZ

HON. CHARLES A. GONZALEZ

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 24, 2005

Mr. GONZALEZ. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to honor a true American hero even though that title is far too often overused. Master Sergeant Jose M. Lopez of San Antonio passed away on May 16th of this year at the age of 94 which in and of itself is remarkable but even more so when one learns of this amazing man's story. Sgt. Lopez was the nation's oldest living Hispanic Medal of Honor winner for his valor during the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. Sgt. Lopez represents the best of us and stands as a shining example of selflessness and sacrifice.

Perhaps it should not be a surprise Sgt. Lopez distinguished himself in battle since he often told one of his granddaughters, June Pedraza, "Fear is the one thing that will hold you back in life." Living that credo time and again throughout his life, Sgt. Lopez faced and overcame seemingly insurmountable odds. Born in Mexico in 1910, Sgt. Lopez's mother died when he was 8 leaving him an orphan since he never met his father. He then worked a series of hardscrabble jobs and eventually made his way to the Rio Grande Valley where a family took pity on him and let him sleep in their shed. Later, he rode trains across America and in Atlanta, a bigger man antagonized Sgt. Lopez until he fought and thoroughly whipped his larger opponent. Coincidentally, a boxing manager happened to see the incident unfold and realized potential even though it was packaged in a 5'5", 130 lb. frame and began training Sgt. Lopez. Rechristened Kid Mendoza, he went on to a professional record of 52 wins and 3 losses and later recounted meeting Babe Ruth as the highlight of his career.

In 1936, Sgt. Lopez joined the U.S. Merchant Marines and later worked a number of other maritime jobs. Once, he found himself adrift on a cargo ship without food except for bananas. After the start of World War II, Sgt. Lopez enlisted in the Army and was among the troops who hit the beaches at Normandy a day after D-Day commenced. Sgt. Lopez was wounded as a bullet nicked his hip and as he told Bill Moyers in 1990 for a PBS documentary "I was really very, very afraid. I wanted to cry, and we saw other people laying wounded and screaming and everything, and there's nothing you could do. We could see them groaning in the water, and we had to keep walking." And, he kept going despite his fears until he found himself at another of World War II's turning points, the Battle of the Bulge.

On December 17th, 1944 shortly after the sun rose, Sgt. Lopez and his troops in Company K were outside Krinkelt, Belgium when the Germans launched their last-ditch offensive which came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge. Patrolling in advance of Company K, Sgt. Lopez heard a tank which he assumed was Allied since a soldier hundreds of yards away failed to alert him otherwise. Carrying a Browning machine gun, he jumped into a shallow hole when he realized the tank was a German Tiger and the troops following it were German. Concerned for his men, he opened